VOL. XII. APRIL, 1904. No. 4.

INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Devoted to the advancement of a religion that is free, spiritual and universal as contrasted with the religions that are creed-bound, traditional and sectarian.

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"I make bold to say that we who are now living will behold—nay, may already behold—the dawn of the day of a new religion which is to be really universal in its principles and as broad as humanity in its boundaries; which is not, however, to be Christianity, nor Judaism, nor Buddhism, nor neo-Brahmanism, but a new faith into which the specific religions are in form to die that they may continue to live in spiritual substance."—WM. J. POTTER.

CONTENTS

The Theistic Faith and its foundations (*concluded*) Charles Voysey, M. A.
Short Answers to Questions Concerning God—Alfred W. Martin.
The Jewish Question—Rabbi Charles Fleischer.
Zeal (*poem*)—James H. West.
The Cause and Cure of Agnosticism—John W. Roberts.
Editorial—Preaching and Practising.
A Unitarian Test Case.
Professor Bowne's Heresy Trial.
Notes from the Field—Seattle, Los Angeles.

Subscriptions should be sent to Samuel Collyer, 213 California Bldg., Tacoma, Wn.
Yearly $1.00 (4s.) Single Numbers 15 cts. (8d.) Issued Monthly, Except July to September.
Entered at the Post Office as Second Class Matter.

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Very respectfully yours,

ALFRED W. MARTIN,
JOHN W. ROBERTS.

Seattle, April 8th, 1904.

INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY
OF
UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

THE THEISTIC FAITH AND ITS FOUNDATIONS.

By Charles Voysey, M. A., Minister of the Theistic Church, London, England.

(Concluded from last month.)

We come next to consider what may be certainly known of God through the faculty of Conscience. Conscience in man is generally confounded with the moral codes, which vary considerably in different races and creeds and in even the same individuals under varying conditions. It is not the function of Conscience to construct moral codes. This is the function of Reason and Love. The Conscience never varies. It is the same everywhere and always, an impulse which makes it possible, which makes it imperative, for each one to feel "I ought" and "I ought not"; I ought to do what I think or know to be right; I ought not to do what I think or know to be wrong; I ought to do right without any hope of reward, no matter how painful it may be; I ought not to do wrong, without any fear of punishment, no matter how pleasant that wrong may be. Finally the Conscience says, I ought to be good at heart and to do right from the best motives. I ought not to be evil, nor to do evil from good motives, nor to act even rightly from bad motives. Moreover the Conscience, in its normal action, brings us immediately into the presence of God, it involves the sense that we ought to obey Him, that we owe it to our Maker to fulfil our obligations to our fellow-men because that fulfilment is due to Him. Now as the author of the universe has given us this Conscience, has tried in this way to make us good, and only good, in our very hearts and characters, it proves that He Himself is good—for no evil god could desire his creatures to be good. This sense of duty within us is an absolute proof that the God who made us is good Himself. These two stones, Reason and Conscience are parts of the Foundation of the Theistic Faith which nothing can shake, and are facts—be it observed—universally acknowledged, and no one ever wishes to dispute them. And were this all that we could discover of the truth about God, it is sufficient ground on which to build trust and worship towards God, because He is proved to be both intelligent and righteous. He can never do wrong throughout all Eternity.

Yet there remains another stone in our threefold foundation

on which is scientifically built the most precious and most adorable of all the attributes of God discoverable through our human faculties. Man is not only a rational being and a moral being. He is also a loving being, capable of and often exhibiting the purest, most disinterested, unselfish Love. As God is the primal Source of our Reason and of our Conscience, so is He likewise the Source of our common human love. This must be remembered in reading what follows on this supreme faculty of our nature.

What is Love? How does it act? True love is an intense desire and longing to do good and the highest good to a fellow-creature, and that at all cost to oneself. In fact, self is forgotten in the ecstasy: the more we sacrifice ourselves for love, the better are we pleased. Nothing counts beside it. Everything else is dross. Can we then pretend that we do not know or understand what this highest human love is, and what it teaches? Why, if the Agnostic and Pessimist had won their way all along the line in their endeavor to overthrow or discredit The Theistic Faith, they could never get over or get through the invincible wonder which Love presents as a witness for God in the hearts of men. For surely we have wits enough to see that there was a purpose in this gift of Love. There was never a purpose in all creation so obvious as this. It was to make all duty attractive; to make its fulfilment the highest pleasure and satisfaction; to draw our hearts to it "by the cords of a man and by the bands of Love" instead of being driven to it by the lash or by the heavy strain of mere obligation. Love was given to us to "run in the way of God's Commandments," and not merely to walk therein, still less to be dragged along the road. God knew how we should feel the strain of obligations and restrictions, the number and weight of our various burdens of duty and of toil; God knew how native indolence would be in league with our self-will and self-indulgence to make it difficult to meet our responsibilities and fulfil His behests. He knew likewise that even while we performed our duty and did our task, if not done cheerfully and of a free heart, it would leave us no better in character than before. The motive was compulson or restraint: it had the taint of slavery and the clang of fetters about it. The heart, howsoever obedient the hands, might still have been wishing all the while to have its own way instead. But now that the unspeakable gift of Love has been poured in upon it, every duty is a delight, every task a pleasure and a privilege to be welcomed and coveted: not a breath of discontent is heard, not a sigh for relief or rest, but a glad leaping up of the whole being to meet and greet the duties which Love has transfigured; a flight as on

wings of eagles, to enjoy, not to submit to, the Divine behests. By Love, God makes our burdens light, our duties pleasures. Love alone enables us to fulfil our duties in the way which alone can satisfy God; love is the motive power, the impulse which is highest and best and can alone render our conduct perfectly acceptable in His sight. For in Love alone there is perfect freedom. Only when inspired by Love can the soul fly upwards to God and cry: "Lo! I come to do thy will, O my God; I am content to do it: Yea, thy law is within my heart." This explains why so many ages ago the "laws of God" were summed up by ancient Theists into one category: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It was seen three thousand years ago —a thousand years before Christ—that Love was all that was wanted to please God and to benefit mankind. It was seen that because God loved all men, He commanded each single person—"Thou"—to love all the rest: for, loving them, each loving heart would benefit and bless them. And to every human heart He has given the power to do so. If any proof were needed that God loves you and me and all mankind, it is found here before our very eyes, sworn to by our very hearts that God expects of us and demands of us each one to love everyone else within his reach. God could not have provided better for human welfare than by giving some measure of love to every man, woman and child, and telling us by our Reason that to love others is the best way to do them good, and our Conscience that we ought to love them. And all this we know. It is not left to conjecture. It is not a fine-spun metaphysical theory which the first rough wind of criticism can blow away. But it is hard dry fact, which no one can dispute, and which is, perhaps, the strongest and simplest evidence of a God, and of what God is, that can be found within the range of human observation and experience. For just as it is certain that that God must be righteous who demands righteousness in man, so it is certain that a God who desired man's highest welfare and who desired to combine goodness and happiness inseparably together, and who has bestowed Love as the means of that union, must Himself be a Loving God, a God who understands what Love is, and who therefore feels it Himself, because in no way possible can Love be understood except by feeling it.

Thus we have built up on the facts of human nature, apart from all so-called "revelations" the primary beliefs of Theism, viz.: that God is supremely wise, righteous and loving, that we may certainly trust Him never to make a mistake, never to do us wrong, always to be aiming at our highest welfare and always

sure of success. Moreover, such a God may be quite as fully trusted when He is doing or permitting things which we do not like: when He is crossing our wills, disappointing our hopes, turning our earthly pleasures into dust and ashes, and making His discipline generally as unpleasant as the Pessimists say it is. For the selfsame troubles and mysteries, on a smaller scale, are the direct and necessary products of the highest and purest love among men, as we see any day in our homes and nurseries, when the highest love, self-sacrifice and not weak indulgence, is the sovereign rule and principle of action. And we may trust God the more, in spite of His painful discipline, because He is not subject to human infirmities, human caprice, human ebullition of temper, human errors of judgment which impede or taint the exercise of parental love on earth. He is never angry or impatient, never fitful or made testy by our varying moods, never less faithful to us for being distrustful and faithless towards Him; never giving us up as too bad and too late to mend, never stopping the flow of His eternal Love, although we have long ago forfeited every claim upon it. We may be sure also that the Divine Freedom of God, that absolute freedom of choice between good and evil, is always compatible with His unfailing choice of goodness, only because a perfect and infinite Love is the motive of every thought and action. It may be well to state that Theism does not only supply this simple sublime faith in God, but its teachers have devoted many years of study to the problems of Pain, Death and Sin in order to meet the objections advanced by the school of Pessimists and Agnostics. Space prevents my entering upon this absorbing theme.

SHORT ANSWERS
TO
QUESTIONS CONCERNING GOD

BY

Alfred W. Martin.

1. Could God prevent cyclones, tornadoes and other nature-catastrophes?

What are storms, cyclones, tornadoes? Simply manifestations of forces that are in operation every year and every day, forces that bring occasional terrible disasters in their train but daily a vast amount of beauty, gladness and benefit to man. Often indeed do they bring evils but these are mathematically infinitesimal when compared to the good they produce. A fierce

northwest wind drives ships out of their course and dashes them to destruction on the rocks; property is destroyed, lives are lost. But that same storm watered ten thousand farms and produced their necessary drink for unnumbered men and beasts.

The daily press devotes columns to some disaster ensuing from nature's forces but not a line to the beneficent effects which those same forces are producing elsewhere. People see God in the storm that wrecks the ship with its passengers and freight, but not in the fair wind that propels a thousand other ships safely to their destination; in the Johnstown flood, but not in the Dutch dykes that are still saying to the sea, here shall thy proud waves be stayed.

What is an earthquake? A tremor in the earth's crust as it shrinks in the cooling process which is fitting it for the safe abode of man. For this earth is not yet fully created and should not be judged adversely until the work of creation has been completed, any more than the apples in an orchard should be condemned in July because they are then sour and green. One waits till October before passing judgment on the fruit. So one should wait till the October of the earth's evolution and not condemn it in the July-stage of its creation when earthquakes occasionally occur, causing immense loss of property and life.

But only by a series of perpetual miracles could God prevent such calamities and then the results would be vastly worse than they are when no interfering miracle is performed, because the whole orderly law-governed system of the universe would be instantly disordered and chaos and universal death ensue. Infinitely better it is that God should not stop the cyclone, the earthquake, the tornado, than that he should introduce a miracle to prevent catastrophes which would be as nothing compared to the greater catastrophe that would follow the minutest infraction upon the orderly ongoing of the universe.

Somehow the notion obtains that God could have made this world like a fairy bower, equipped with everything that everybody wants and with every needed appliance for the gratification of everybody's wishes for all eternity. We see this attitude expressed in the remark of Alphonse of Castile who said he could have made some excellent suggestions had he been present at the creation of the world. We see it again in Comte's statement "this world might have been tipped at a different angle." And again in the effusions of a modern poet who exclaims:

"If I were God, my stricken one,
Thy wound would heal;
Thy feet a path of roses
From birth to death would tread.

If I were God, my loving one,
I would give birth to perfect beings;
There would be a heaven without a hell,
Discord never and harmony forever,
If I were God."

But only in a world where both miracle and law could coexist would such sentiments as these have any meaning. And not even Omnipotence can produce such a world, for miracle and law are mutually contradictory. When therefore we face the calamities caused by the action of nature's forces we do not say God WILLED to drown the passengers, destroy the population, devastate the district; he simply did not interfere and it is infinitely better that God should not interfere than that by interfering bring about inevitable and universal chaos, better that the law of cause and effect, fraught with incalculable benefit to man, be fulfilled than that by the intervention of miracle local calamities should be averted and human grief and anguish spared. And we may well believe that the infinite heart of Omnipotence suffers sympathizes and compensates, while obeying the conditions on which the creation and maintenance of an orderly law-governed universe depend.

2. Could God prevent physical evil, such as pain and disease?

The argument is that if God were really good he ought to have prevented both, even as he ought to have made it impossible for calamities and catastrophes to occur, in the form of life destroying earthquakes and cyclones. But could God prevent physical evil? Not if he meant to have human beings with nerves, because the same nervous sensibility that enables us to appreciate agreeable sensations likewise enables us to appreciate disagreeable ones. So that even Omnipotence could not create a race capable of pleasure without at the same time creating them capable of pain. Positive, pleasurable sensations would never be known to us were it not for their opposite. The only way in which God could prevent physical evil would be by keeping perpetual momentary watch over every one of us, prepared to interfere every time we were liable to hurt ourselves or break any law and suffer the necessary consequence. Now imagine this world the scene of millions of such miracles, God interfering to save his billions of children every time they were likely to be injured. What would it mean? It would mean the end of all progress, of all incentives to knowledge and action, the end of all education, of all motives for work; the whole system of discipline and learning would be broken up. For why should we

act at all if we do not know what to expect from an action, or if miracles are to be performed for us at every turn? Therefore, if we are to have a world in which progress is the mainspring of life, I do not see how Omnipotence could possibly save free, intelligent, responsible beings from suffering. Apply the question to your own experience, you who are parents. Suppose you should undertake to spare your child every possible kind of pain, trouble, suffering, help the child over every obstacle in its path, lift it over every obstruction as it learns to walk, solve every problem in its schooling. You would have at length a grown up infant. So if God were to save us all trouble and pain he would eventually have a race of adult infants, not men and women with developed knowledge, wisdom, experience, insight. But for the blessed scourge of pain driving us to investigation and knowledge of the conditions on which health and happiness depend, the race would have died off years ago or be still in the barbarism whence it so slowly emerged. Pain therefore, is a blessed spur that goads man on to knowledge of health, happiness and prosperity, a divine danger-signal set up all along the border line of safety calling attention to the essential conditions of human welfare, a great sign-board marked "no thoroughfare, trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law." And as fast as the significance of that inscription is mastered pain will be diminished and the sign-board be taken down.

3. Could God prevent moral evil, or sin?

Like the preceding question concerning physical evil this one assumes that the goodness of God is impeached in as much as sin, or the possibility of sin is not prevented.

But could God prevent it? Not if he meant to create moral beings, i. e. beings free to choose between alternatives of conduct, good and bad. A moral being is simply one capable of seeing the higher of two courses of conduct and of choosing it. Consequently not even Omnipotence could create a moral being without at the same time creating the possibility of sin. To create human beings incapable of sin would be to create them also incapable of virtue or character. To ask further whether God could not have made us morally perfect all at once is pure foolishness. For what do we mean by morally perfect? What is there involved in the very idea of moral perfection? Conquest of temptation, conflict with besetting sin, mastery over all forms of moral evil through spiritual struggle. Character is meaningless apart from such effort. As well ask if God could create a five year old colt in two minutes as to ask if God could create a morally perfect being all at once. Moral health like physical

health is the result of experience and discipline, discovering you have gone wrong and choosing to go right. The only way in which God could possibly prevent sin or the possibility of sin would be either by creating us automata, wound up and warranted never to go wrong or by hovering over us continually and by miraculous interference checking us every time we were prone to sin. But this would mean an end to all character, all morality, all spiritual growth, attainments that we prize above all else.

But for the blessed possibility of sin the race would be bereft of its grandest human inspirers all of whom attained the heights they reached through the discipline of moral and spiritual conflict. And when we think of these great historic inspirers of the moral life and of the infinite possibilities of the human spirit as they are revealed to us through our own experience, we may well thank God that in his infinite plan PERSONS not machines, MORAL BEINGS not automata were evolved and that character through suffering was made possible rather than perpetual infantile innocence without suffering. Thank God that his providence is pledged by evolution to make us more and more grandly men and women, not to keep us in perpetual infancy. And the only way in which infants can be developed into noble men and women is by sending them to the school of experience. We may go further still and say that all the seeming roughness and harshness of the Divine treatment of us is perfectly consistent with Divine tenderness and that God is never so tender as when through the discipline of sorrow, suffering and sin he makes us worthy to become his children.

When, therefore, we see and sum up the losses to humanity that would occur were either physical or moral evil to be taken away, we realize anew the infinite wisdom of the Eternal Goodness.

Finally, every impeachment of the beneficence of God can be refuted with one or another of the following five facts. (1). This world is not yet fully created and therefore must not be adversely judged or condemned until the task of creation is finished. (2). This world is everywhere under the reign of law, forbidding the possibility of miracles and committing Omnipotence to inexorable conditions of achievement. (3). Physical evil or pain is a blessed danger-signal pointing man to the conditions on which health depends. (4.) The possibility of sin makes the possibility of character which is the highest end of human life. (5.) All our unrealized ideals are the divinest possessions we have because they beckon us on to grander heights of moral and spiritual attainment and intimate our immortality. In a word,

the universe is a school, God the teacher, the race his pupils, the discipline of experience their education, the prize, beautiful strong and ever-progressive character.

THE JEWISH QUESTION.

By Rabbi Charles Fleischer.

Almost, one might think, Emerson meant the Jew when he said: "Thou art the unanswered question," so everlastingly and without adequate solution do we have what is called "the Jewish Question" propounded. Latest among the attempts to solve the problem is Arnold White's, the English publicist's, pregnant suggestion in an article in the North American Review for January. As a practical idealist, i. e., as a man wishing to settle humanely a pressing human problem, he makes appeal to the enlightened self-interest of Russia, England and America.

Russia cannot solve this problem alone. Indeed it is not her problem only but is essentially international. Mr. White therefore suggests that the czar call into conference with his own representatives others appointed by the governments of England and the United States, to the end that each Power may understand the problem as it affects the others. All this, preparatory to an effort at its solution. Furthermore, this friendly publicist proposes that "the Russo-Anglo-American conference should adopt the principle that Russia should provide territory and that the other Powers should find capital for the establishment of the redundant Jewish population now multiplying in the Pale to their own misery and the certainty of eventual bloodshed and resolution."

Let me quote a final item from this interesting series of proposals: "The necessary capital should consist: (a) Of the funds of the Jewish Colonization Association (the Hirsch millions) as a nucleus; (b) of the subscriptions of wealthy Jews, who shall be invited to suspend their generosity to rich nations until the congestion of the Jewish Pale is relieved, and the Jewish problem is solved by the settlement of their co-religionists in territory of adequate size: (c) of contributions from Christians of all nations, who believe that the race to which their founder belonged has a positive and primary claim on their charity and their good-will." These suggestions of Mr. White are the outcome of years of sympathetic study and investigation. He has visited Russia on behalf of Baron Hircsh himself. He has conferred with Russian statesmen in England and in Russia. He has even had numerous interviews with Torquemada's spiritual descendant, the

Procurator Pobiedonostzeff. This merciless defender of the faith of mercy says he is no anti-Semite, but he is a lover of the "holy Russian people," who need to be defended against the Jews, because the Jews are parasites and middlemen, brokers and traders in the vices and weaknesses of the peasants, and themselves filthy and vile.

Says Mr. White to Pobiedonostzeff: "Russia, having made the Jews what they are, punishes them for the result of her own act." At which the Russian shrugs shoulders and appeals to the present necessity of applying Nature's first law of self-preservation, and the duty of rulers toward the majority of their subjects. But have rulers a duty towards a majority of their subjects which they have not towards a minority, and towards every humblest individual? But there—my very query indicates my unfitness to participate in the proposed conference, for I prove myself incapable, as an American, of occupying the same ground as Russian or Briton, in refusing, as I do, to recognize majorities in a matter of ethics. For Mr. White speaks of the "duty" of rulers towards the majority of their subjects. Perhaps, after all, the question is one of expediency rather than of abstract duty and absolute justice.

Mr. White calls the attention of the world to what all the world knows—that the Jew practically refuses to intermarry with non-Jews, and that therefore he fails to become assimilated with the people among whom he lives. This failure to assimilate he holds responsible for the animosity towards the Jew. He pictures the Jew as maintaining not so much a hostile attitude, as one suggestive of nausea towards the other members of the human family, as though he dreaded the "contamination" of intermarriage. Really, the Jew has not been aware of the eagerness of Christians, these past 1500 years to give sons and daughters of the true faith to the daughters and sons of the unbelieving Jew! I do not mean to seem bitter (that would be seeming what I do not feel), but I do wish strongly to assert that it is pathetically ridiculous to hold the Jew responsible for failure to become assimilated with the non-Jew through intermarriage. We must not expect the Jew to be "Christian" enough actually to fall in love with those who hate and persecute him. That end might better be accomplished by the Christian's learning the wisdom of loving, and thus winning the affection and, perhaps, accomplishing the assimilation of the Jew. But at present there is no likelihood of a solution of the Jewish Question by the process of marital suicide on the Jew's part.

Mr. Zangwill has just married a non-Jewish young woman—and probably his descendants in the third and fourth generation

will not yet have become sufficiently "assimilated" to forget their Jewish blood and to lose intense sympathy with the universal Jewish brotherhood. The individual Jew here and there may intermarry with non-Jews (that kind of union may rapidly increase, with resultant improvement of the human strain of both elements), but no general assimilation through intermarriage is at all likely while persecution, hatred, ill will, or prejudice towards the Jew continues. The world may some day kill the Jew with kindness; it will never persecute, reason, or "confer" him out of existence. The Jew has the right to refuse intermarriage—at least as strong a right as any of the hereditary aristocracies or the mushroom plutocracies have the right deliberately to refuse marriage with any but their own class. The Jew's assumption of spiritual aristocracy and religious leadership may be presumptnous and indefensible from any point of view but his own (I do not now undertake to defend his attitude), but he is entitled to assuming and maintaining it and proving it—let him not forget the constant proving of it! His one time intense national sense has survived in this guise, and he uses it, perhaps unconsciously, as the one means for religious self-preservation. If the world hate him therefor—why, then, let the world look to itself, for the Jew will not give up his identity and his religion even to win the world's love. Such, at any rate, is my interpretation of the Jews' purposed and unpurposed aloofness,—whatever may be my own particular views of its desirability or undesirability.

I lay so much stress upon this aspect of the question, because Mr. White seems to find, in the Jew's attitude towards intermarriage and his consequent failure to become assimilated, the chief reason for the development of those qualities in the Jew which make for the persistence of "the Jewish question." He is right, for if there were no Jews, there would be no Jewish problem, and if intermarriage could suddenly become violently epidemic (instead of being very mildly sporadic), the great body of Jews would, in perhaps two hundred years more, be lovingly and benevolently assimilated. But if the attitude of non-Jew toward Jew could conceivably become so loving and benevolent, then the Jewish question would thereby already be solved, for the one solvent now needed is that Christendom become converted to Christianity; that is to say, that wise and far-seeing love now set itself to undoing in the Jew what long centuries of blind and stupid hatred had accomplished. Apply more widely Mr. White's statement: "Russia, having made the Jews what they are, punishes them for the result of her own act."

"The Jewish Question?" Stop asking it—and soon it will

need no answer. Yes; let representatives of Russia, England and America confer about the Jew. And let the conference be opened with the recitation, by all in unison, of the greatest of the commandments as enunciated by that great Jew, Jesus. "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one—and thou shalt love him—and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!" Now proceed, brothers, with your conference as to the welfare of him whom you have so long thrust away from the circle of brotherhood, the Jew—who, though you have persistently shown him only your uglier side, is eager to behold you transfigured in the loveliness of loving, eager at last to join cause in striving with you towards the beauty of holiness. To the self-respecting Jew, there is something fundamentally false in Mr. White's and the common assumption: that the Jew is so radically different from his fellowmen that he presents a particular question for solution and that his problems vary essentially from other human problems. Anyone must recognize that whatever the millions of Russian Jews may be now is no criterion of what they might be (and, I maintain would be) were they, first of all, accepted into the human brotherhood, into normal human relations and intercourse. Assimilation—if that is the end most to be wished and assured—would then follow gradually and quickly enough.

But I maintain that this is not particularly desirable. However helpful for strategic reasons and for purposes of fostering international antagonisms, it is not otherwise a consummation so devoutly to be wished that all inhabitants of Russia become Slavic in body and mind and belief, all Germans Teutonic, all Britons English, and all Americans—what shall I say? That way degeneration lies—as witness Spain and Italy and France. If the world's hatred of the Jew is due to the Jew's self-insistence, then I predict the ultimate victory of the Jew, as I foresee the ultimate triumph everywhere of individuality over the organized power of society and social institutions. Perhaps, herein again the Jew is privileged to fight the world's fight—to suffer and endure and stand as the symbol of an idea, the might of consecrated minority, the right of self-respecting individuality. Were I not a Jew, I would still sympathize with, and fervently hope for the success of that struggling symbol in its wrestlings with the opportunist practicalities of this workaday world.

Appreciating to the utmost the sympathetic diagnosis which Mr. White has made of the non-Jew's disease called anti-Semitism, and grateful as I am for the exhibition of practical idealism shown in his proposal of a Russian-Anglo-American conference on the "Jewish Question"—yet I hope for no particularly efficient results from such a conference. And still the conference

would be worth while, if merely it succeeded in convincing men (to use Mr. White's own final words) that "it is the duty of every Christian and of every non-Christian to put aside causes of difference, and to join hands with the object of ending the journeyings of the wandering Jew."

For one, I shall have more faith in a possibility of solving the Russian aspect of this human problem, when Russia is able to spend upon the general education of her backward millions the vast sums now spent upon the maintenance of armies and navies, and when the spirit of democracy thereafter informs the people, the Government, the laws and institutions, so that Jew and Doukhobor, and Finn, Slav, Semite and nondescript each is recognized, respected and loved as "a man for a' that and a' that."

ZEAL

By James H. West.

To Be! to Do! To have the zeal to climb
O'er all the shocks of Fate to zones sublime!
To know that Time's successes,—praise and blame,—
Are transient fires however fierce they flame;
That soon and late are equal,—death and birth,—
And love's sweet dominance alone of worth;
That toil and struggle and pain's agony
Are nothing if the inner eye but see!
To realize, though cumbered in earth's ooze,
That there are heights with ever vaster views
To which the soul is hasting, freed from strife!—
This is the spirit's pole-star—this is life.

THE CAUSE AND CURE OF AGNOSTICISM*

By John W. Roberts.

Paul, the illustrious apostle to the Gentiles, is responsible for the word agnosticism. While at Athens this Christian missionary wandered about among the objects worshipped by the Athenians and noted in particular one on which were inscribed the words 'Agnosto Theo', To an Unknown God. But it was through Professor Huxley that the word entered into our English languge. As he himself informs us the word was coined by him to serve as his label at the London Metaphysical Society.

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*Extracts from a discourse spoken before the First Free Church of Tacoma, March 27, 1904.

We probably should never have heard very much about agnosticism, however, but for Dr. Wace who in a paper read before the Manchester Church Congress in 1888 took the liberty to criticise the agnostic position. This criticism resulted in opening a controversy which ran through several numbers of the "Nineteenth Century" monthly and which was participated in by Professor Huxley, Dr. Wace, Bishop Magee, Mrs. Humphrey Ward and Mr. Mallock. I will not try to summarize the substance of that controversy. Suffice it for me to say in passing that the main charge brought against Huxley was that he called himself an agnostic in order to evade the unpleasant duty of saying that he disbelieved the statements of Jesus Christ. What Huxley in his heart means by agnosticism, said Dr. Wace, is that he distrusts Jesus Christ. Since this Wace-Huxlean controversy the word agnosticism has come to mean a tolerably definite attitude of mind which may be briefly described as the disposition to disbelieve in the existence of all realities for which there is no logical evidence. That all realities must meet the logical test implies that we have no organ but the logical organ for apprehending truth. So that agnosticism reduces itself finally to the belief that the logical intellect is man's exclusive organ of knowledge. As to the existence of anything beyond, the curt reply is, 'I don't know, I am an agnostic.'

Agnosticism is a subject which has engaged the attention of the best minds of the last generation, and it is not my purpose to vie with these masters in pointing the way out of agnosticism. But interested as I am in crediting our nature with all the power due it and realizing that the spiritual realities do lie outside of the sphere of the logical understanding, I wish to say a few things about the agnostic's position. And in the first place a word or two about the cause which has brought him into his agnosticism.

As I read the history of human thought the causes of agnosticism have been in the main two. The first is to be found in an unexpected quarter. For I doubt if it has occurred to many of you that the Christian church has taught and still teaches an agnostic view of man's power to know the realities of the unseen world. But I am very sure that an impartial judgment of the attitude of the Christian theology toward our human powers of cognition will show this to be true. To prove my statement, take the fundamental doctrine of the Chrsitian theology, the mediatorial function of Christ. This doctrine would have been impossible on the hypothesis that man can have direct relations with his God. And the everlasting excuse for ascribing this curious mediatorial office to the plain carpenter of Nazareth

has always been that man naturally is unable to know and to understand and to commune with his God. In the controversy with Huxley, Dr. Wace frankly admitted that the Christians were agnostics so far as human powers are concerned. Substantially this is the question he asks: "Who can dream of knowing God, that he exists and that he exercises a Providence over this world?" And his answer is: "The matter is not one open to the observation of our faculties. And as a matter of cognition we are not in a position to know it. The agnostic differs from a Christian not in the fact that he has no means of a scientific knowledge of these things, but that he does not believe the authority on which they are stated." In other words Christian theology agrees with the agnostics that man has no faculty for knowing God, but the Christians profess to make amends for our natural agnosticism by substituting for it the agnosticism of Christ. Christ's knowledge of God is offered as a supplement to our agnosticism. But Hulxey and his disciples saw too clearly that salvation through substitution was an impossibility. And it was for seeing and boldly teaching this truth that Huxley was called an infidel.

Since the reformation of William Ellery Channing there has been a slight modification of this Christian doctrine of agnosticism. Liberal Christianity and new orthodoxy are now willing to allow that man may imitate the divine consciousness of Christ. So we hear a good deal about the Christ ideal, the Christ pattern, and the leadership of Christ. And doubtless Christ, the example, is an advance on Christ the substitute. But even this concession comes far short of a repudiation of agnosticism. And both the liberal and the orthodox wings of the Christian church so far as their published beliefs are concerned still hold to the agnostic view of our human powers. I think, then, that I am justified in saying, as I did a moment ago, that the Christian church must be counted as one of the causes of the agnostic philosophy.

The other cause which has worked powerfully in producing agnosticism is physical science. Not that physical science necessarily implies agnosticism. And I do not mean that all physical scientists are agnostics. But what I wish to say is that the temptation to become an agnostic is quite strong for the man whose mind is exclusively employed with the materials and instruments of physical investigation. We are all liable to become twisted and moulded into the forms of our habitual occupations, and no man is absolutely safe against bias. In exercising a certain set of muscles to the total neglect of others we attain a one-sided muscular development. In constantly using certain

mental faculties to the neglect of others we attain a one-sided mental development. All occupations which call for a high grade of proficiency in one organ are likely to leave the other organs undeveloped. A good eye may go with a bad ear and a delicate taste with an indelicate touch. It is none otherwise with a scientist. He deals with facts of sensation. Upon these he founds his hypotheses, from these he draws his inferences, and with these he tests the truth of his conclusions. And it is not at all to be wondered at that a mind exclusively employed with material things should come to feel that nothing else but material things exist. As a matter of fact this is just what has taken place in the case of many a scientist, though once in a while there is a man who, like Professor Shaler of Harvard, writes poetry to correct the bias of his profession.

Physical science, then, must bear a part of the responsibility for producing the agnostic. She is responsible for the statement of Huxley that a man is immoral who believes in any reality for which he can furnish no logical evidence. Logical evidence! What is it? What do we do when we give logical evidence? We simply bring the unknown into terms of the known. But this can be done only on the supposition that the known and the unknown are always bound together by a link of identity. But are we ready to say that everything to be known is a case of what we now actually know? Are there no absolutely new things in the womb of the future? Are there no new beginnings in the life of knowledge? Surely the logician must pause before the consequence of his own creed. It is too narrow for a life teeming with all sorts of essences and realities.

Considering, then that the two most powerful institutions of our modern life, the Christian church and material science have encouraged us to believe that we cannot know God, what wonder is it that we are agnostics? So much for the way in. But what about the way out, the cure of agnosticism?

As there have been at least two ways in so there are two ways out. The one most commonly used starts from the facts and laws of science and upon these as a foundation builds out a highway leading into the higher invisible world. According to this method the realities of religion are known as implications of the realities of science, but not seen face to face. It reasons that as secondary finite causes are not self-initiative there must be an infinite cause, that as phenomena require a back-ground of noumena there must be a world behind the appearances, and that as finite temporal forces are fixed in amount there must be an infinite and an eternal energy whence all finite realities proceed. Another type of the indirect method of knowing God is

to be found in the teleological philosophies. Observing that nature bears evidences of adaptation of means to ends, some of them marvelous in ingenuity and skill, we reason back from such traces of an intelligent action to an intelligent cause. We say that a world with design in it must have had a designing cause, an author with a mind and a purpose. As the laws of science show order and harmony so they must have had a cause capable of appreciating order. In a word the creation implies a creator, calls for him as a logical necessity to explain its own existence. In the effect we find the footprints of the cause—"the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

The other way out of agnosticism is the direct way with no inference or implication intervening between the mind and the higher world. This method starts with facts that are religious in their own right, thus putting into the premises of the argument all that comes out in the conclusion. According to this method God is felt as a living reality today and these facts of feeling form the absolute beginnings for a religion of experience. The only point in dispute here is the fact of the religious experiences themselves. Are these experiences real or do the printed accounts of them bear on their face the evident marks of delusion or fraud?

EDITORIAL.

PREACHING AND PRACTISING

More than once have we heard liberal preachers discoursing on Prayer from the standpoint of the new conception of prayer, stating explicitly that petition has no legitimate or rational place in modern prayer, demonstrating and illustrating their contention with singular clearness and power and then offering a prayer which utterly contradicted the central message of the sermon. So, again, we have known others whose theism is avowedly Copernican invite the congregation to sing a hymn in which the God-idea is of the most pronounced Ptolemaic type. And yet ministers wonder why it is that people are so slow in understanding and accepting the new thought of the new day. No headway can be looked for in a church whose minister is careless as to consistency in this regard. Let him scrupulously attend to the harmony of his Sunday service, see to it that hymn, sermon, anthem, prayer are all in accord and in no respect or degree mutually contradictory and he renders a positive service to the cause of clear thinking, consistent acting and religious progress.

A UNITARIAN TEST CASE.

Suppose the minister of a Unitarian church should reach the conviction that the name Christian no longer adequately denotes his conception of religious universality, that the statements of the National Unitarian constitution regarding acceptance of the religion of Jesus and the summary of practical religion no longer express his position. Assume that he frankly tells his people of these changes in his theological thinking, adding that nevertheless he feels no need of resigning because Unitarianism stands for perfect freedom of thought and of speech. Would that congregation retain him as their minister? Would they not say in effect: Unitarianism in 1894 pledged itself anew to the Christian name, it made acceptance of the religion of Jesus and his summary of practical religion a unifying belief of the denomination, therefore since you do not any longer endorse this position we must ask for your resignation. This indeed is what has actually happened more than once and justly so. What else is the belief-statement in the national constitution for if not to represent in some measure the Unitarian position? And if a conflict between it and the demands of perfect freedom occurs, what alternative has the aggrieved congregation but to appeal to the unanimously adopted national constitution of ten years ago? If our Unitarian brethren do not mean to have any such test of fellowship they ought not to have that belief-statement in their constitution. Theoretically it is a harmless thing but in actual practice it has worked real harm to more than one minister whose "orthodoxy" was called in question by officials of the denomination and whose insistence on freedom of thought and of speech was ignored.

Say what one will of the autonomy of the Unitarian churches of America the fact remains that it is conditioned by the collective vote of the denomination taken in 1894. We challenge our Unitarian friends to point to a single Unitarian church anywhere in which our test-case would result in anything else than the minister's resignation. No denomination can serve both freedom and authority and such cases as those in Chicago, Tacoma and Seattle, prove it. If genuine, open fellowship is meant to be offered, if nothing in the nature of a theological test is meant to be imposed, if all the historic exclusions from 1894 to 1903 are not to occur any more, let the national Unitarian constitution be stripped of those clauses which now test and disfellowship and exclude.

PROFESSOR BOWNE'S HERESY TRIAL

The forthcoming heresy trial of Professor Borden P. Bowne of Boston University seems to be looked forward to as rather a trivial, not to say an amusing, affair. The New York Tribune expects much entertainment not to be "missed for a great deal," the very idea of such a trial "irresistibly appealing to the Tribune's sense of humor." The charges of heresy have been brought against Professor Bowne by the Rev. George A. Cooke of West Medford, Massachusetts. In a pamphlet entitled "The Present and Future of Methodism," Mr. Cooke accuses Professor Bowne of holding philosophical and theological views which are "fundamentally un-Methodistic and anti-Christian." We do not wish to express an opinion as to the right of Professor Bowne to the names Methodist and Christian but we regret to note that so many of the editorials on the incident treat it as a huge joke. It has come to be something of a fashion now-a-days to take creeds and statements of faith lightly. But, if we mistake not, this is a bad omen both for religion and morality. As to religion, it tends to create the impression that one faith is just as good, or just as bad, as another and that religious truth is an ideal which can be neither attained nor approached. As to morality, it tends to make us disloyal to our convictions especially if our convictions happen to call for some change in our practical conduct. That the truth of a religious proposition is not mathematically and logically demonstrable does not free us from the responsibility of acting in a manner consistent with our as yet undemonstrable beliefs. Our moral responsibility is even more serious towards the dumb intuitions of the heart than towards those ideas whose truth has been proved beyond the possibility of a doubt. We do not know Mr. Cooke but this short account of the way he came to prefer charges of heresy against Professor Bowne ought to serve as a moral tonic to help us all to suit the action to the word. Having reached the conviction that Professor Bowne was not a Methodist and a Christian, "what" asks Mr. Cooke "was I to do about it? One of two courses was open to me. I must either keep quiet over the matter, and ignore it as an ugly necessity that must be borne with, or else expose what I had discovered to the Church at large. The first course was strongly urged upon me by my selfishness, my pride and my fears. I yielded to these influences as long as I could endure it. Cowardice seemed to prevail for a time, but the burden of this knowledge oppressed me until it seemed as though a sense of guilt was eating out of me everything that was good. Better influences finally prevailed, and I resolved, come what would, to publish to the world what I had found in the published works of Professor Bowne." R.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

SEATTLE.

During Mr. Martin's absence on a brief lecturing and missionary visit to Los Angeles, the Sunday evening services on March 20th and 27th were conducted by Rabbi Joseph of Seattle and Mr. John W. Roberts, minister of the Tacoma Free church. The Sunday morning services of the Junior Branch of the Society were conducted by Mrs. Martin, she continuing the series of illustrated sermons on the "Life of Jesus" which Mr. Martin began in January. On Easter Sunday Mr. Martin spoke to the Juniors on "An Easter Bud," drawing practical lessons from the rose bud which he used as a text. In the evening he began a series of six discourses on "Immortality and Modern Thought."

LOS ANGELES.

As a result of the Sunday services conducted on an independent basis by Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills in this city there has been formed a religious association known as "The Fellowship," numbering nearly three hundred adherents. At a business meeting held March 3, it was unanimously voted to call Mr. Mills for a year as minister of the new society. Mr. Martin was present at this meeting and urged the committee to do all in its power to secure the services of Mr. Mills in this capacity so that "The Fellowship" might be certain of continuance, a result hardly to be expected without a resident leader. Mr. Mills had already made known to the committee his plan to proceed with his evangelizing work, preferring to preach the liberal gospel in as many cities as possible rather than to settle in any one city. But it was felt (and with undoubted truth) that if he could be induced to remain for at least a year "The Fellowship" would be not only saved from certain dissolution but positively established and sufficiently organized to secure a successor to Mr. Mills when his travels as an evangelist would be resumed. Foremost among those who entertained and presented this point of view was Mr. Eber. T. Dunning whom all the charter members of the First Free church of Tacoma will gratefully remember as an efficient and devoted member of the board of trustees and as one of the three (Mr. Martin and Mr. R. J. Davis were the other two) who drafted the basis of fellowship for the Tacoma society on the occasion of its advance from Unitarianism to Universal or non-sectarian religion. It is to be hoped that Mr. Mills will accept the Los Angeles call. Though somewhat compromised by his connection with Orthodox Congregationalism and Unitarianism his sympathies are avowedly with the movement for free, spiritual and universal religion and a third society of this kind could be more easily established in Los Angeles now than anywhere else on the Pacific coast.